



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 30, 2006

Contact: Joy Goldenberg, WSF Customer and Community Relations, (206) 515-3411

## **WSF Completes Latest Stage of Environmental Cleanup at Eagle Harbor**

(BAINBRIDGE ISLAND) For the past month, Washington State Ferries (WSF) has carried out the latest in a series of projects to cleanup the West Harbor area of the Eagle Harbor Superfund Site. WSF purchased this portion of the site in the late 1990s and inherited the contamination that remained from previous years of shipbuilding and boat maintenance. The most recent cleanup work completed on Tuesday, August 29 involved placing a membrane of sand and gravel over seepage detected in the northwest corner of the site. The discharges are highly localized, not extending beyond the immediate area, and pose no risk to human or aquatic health. This project is designed to provide an effective barrier against the leaching of copper and zinc contaminants, and was developed in coordination with federal, state, and tribal agencies.

Concentrations of copper and zinc appeared to be decreasing after they were first discovered in 2000 during post superfund cleanup monitoring. The concentrations at the seep exceeded state Marine Water Quality Standards (MWQS); however, the surface water in the tributary immediately adjacent to the seepage did not exceed MWQS, and did not pose a threat to aquatic life or human health. After careful monitoring of the area indicated concentrations in the seepage were not continuing to decrease, WSF worked with the regulatory agencies to study different remediation measures, and to pursue funding for the remediation. Once funding was secured (in 2005), construction work had to be completed in accordance with regulations that require in-water work to be done between July and February (for the protection of fish) and during periods of very low tides. This left a very small window of opportunity for construction. Now that this latest stage of environmental cleanup is complete, WSF will continue to work with the agencies to monitor the area to ensure the project's success or determine if additional work is required.

WSF has maintained its vessel maintenance operations at Eagle Harbor since the 1960s, but has not contributed to the site's Superfund status. Extensive clean up efforts involving several parties, including the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), U.S. Navy, PACCAR, WA Department of Natural Resources, and WSF, have amounted to almost \$35 million since 1988. The area where the recent contaminant seep existed is on property acquired by WSF in the late 1990s for expansion of its maintenance facility. This area was included in treatment efforts carried out in 1997 by WSF and PACCAR.

Following these cleanup actions, WSF has monitored the area on a regular basis in accordance with a monitoring plan approved and overseen by the EPA.

WSF Executive Director Mike Anderson recognizes the important role held by WSF in ensuring the long-term health of Eagle Harbor, “We take our role as steward of Eagle Harbor very seriously, recognizing that our maintenance operations are on a Superfund site. We’ll be here for the long haul, and are committed to being good environmental stewards.”

As a state agency, WSDOT/WSF is committed to environmental stewardship and responsible implementation of the department's transportation services. For more information please visit the WSDOT Environmental Services website at:  
<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/environment/compliance/default.htm>

###